

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-2102

<http://www.mcgobern.house.gov>

April 11, 2018

438 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2102  
(202) 225-6101

DISTRICT OFFICES:  
12 EAST WORCESTER STREET, SUITE 1  
WORCESTER, MA 01604  
(508) 831-7356

94 PLEASANT STREET  
NORTHAMPTON, MA 01060  
(413) 341-8700

24 CHURCH STREET, ROOM 27  
LEOMINSTER, MA 01453  
(978) 466-3552

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Defense  
House Appropriations Committee  
H-405 U.S. Capitol Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pete Visclosky  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Defense  
House Appropriations Committee  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member Visclosky,

As you determine funding and policy priorities for the Fiscal Year 2019 Defense Appropriations Act, we ask that you provide \$10 million in funding for competitive grant programs to support nonprofit organizations committed to connecting service dogs with servicemembers and veterans.

In addition to support for funding for this competitive grant program, we also request that you include the following report language.

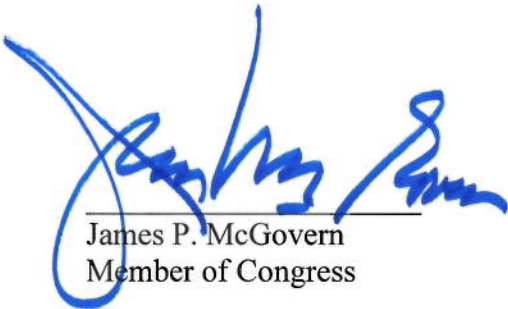
The committee is aware that canine therapy for treatment of PTSD and TBI symptoms is a promising alternative or adjunct to pharmaceutical treatment, which can have harmful side-effects. In testimony before Congress, witnesses from the Services were positive about the potential for this treatment, calling canine therapy for PTSD "an emerging area of alternative therapy" that is "beneficial in the support of people with either physical or mental health diagnoses," and that can "help reduce anxiety, lower emotional reactivity, and provide a sense of security." While still experimental, canine therapy has shown effectiveness in treating PTSD and other psychological disorders, from hospitalized psychiatric patients to children with developmental disorders, patients with substance abuse problems, and victims of trauma. The Services report that service members who participate in their canine programs for PTSD and TBI show more positive social interactions, a decrease in suicidal thoughts, an increased sense of safety, independence, motivation, and self-efficacy. The committee notes that canine therapy is a promising area for further research as a complementary or alternative treatment for the signature wounds of the ongoing conflict. Therefore, the committee provides funds and continues to encourage the Services to initiate or expand their research into canine therapy to validate its therapeutic effectiveness in the treatment of PTSD and TBI.

Given that so many of our service men and women are returning home with both physical and mental health disabilities, it is critical that we continue to provide them with access to multiple treatment resources. Many nonprofit organizations who train service dogs are limited in their ability to connect service dogs with veterans and service members due to financial constraints.

This request builds upon the funding provided in Fiscal Years 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 to ensure adequate grant funding opportunities for these nonprofits and expand efforts to research this important issue. Such funds are critical to ensuring that we provide our service members and veterans with the care they deserve.

Service dogs are helping to treat veterans with physical disabilities as well as individuals who suffer from post-traumatic stress. Assistance dogs help service men and women lead more independent lives, assisting with mobility and balance, retrieving and carrying objects, responding to sounds, getting help, and providing social interaction and companionship. Trained dogs also offer many therapeutic benefits to soldiers and veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress by elevating their moods, building confidence, and reducing stress, all of which ease the transition back into civilian life. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



Walter B. Jones  
Member of Congress



Martha McSally  
Member of Congress



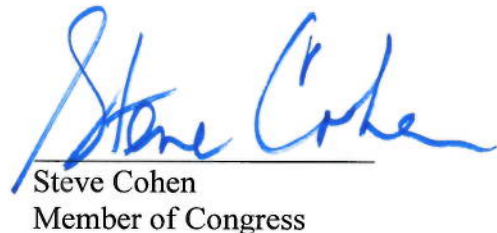
Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress



Ted Deutch  
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress

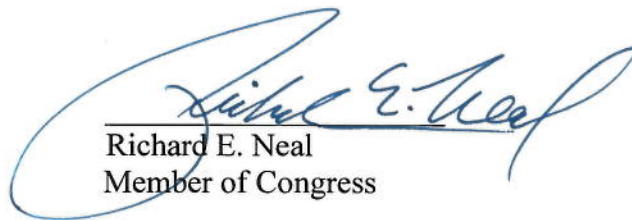


Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress





Tim Walz  
Member of Congress



Richard E. Neal  
Member of Congress



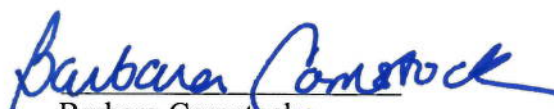
Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress



Scott Peters  
Member of Congress




Peter Welch  
Member of Congress



Barbara Comstock  
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



Carol Shea-Porter  
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress




Dina Titus  
Member of Congress



Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress



Stacey E. Plaskett  
Member of Congress



Jacky Rosen  
Member of Congress